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Academic Freedom At Calvin College

This little analysis of academic freedom is not intended to be pertinent for only one small denominational college. The problems raised by the demand for academic freedom are of broad importance. A specific case is merely used as an illustration. Non-Christian Reformed readers will, we hope, attach special significance to this article, because it also discusses some fundamental school organization questions.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is against academic freedom at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, the denominational college of the Christian Reformed church.

A proposition against academic freedom may dismay some readers of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Here it is, a publication devoted to *liberty* and *noncoercion* and *meekness,* which plainly states that it is *against* academic freedom at a denominational college.

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Academic Freedom Differs From Freedom Of Speech Or Of Thought

We should, first of all, having plainly stated our position, relieve ourselves of any criticism which is based on the view that *academic freedom* is the same thing as *freedom of thought* and *freedom of speech.* We heartily support *freedom of thought* and *freedom of speech* for every member of the faculty and for every student at Calvin College. Those two freedoms — freedom of thought and freedom of speech — are priceless.

The apparent contradiction consisting in favoring *freedom of speech* for faculty members but opposing *academic freedom* for them can be resolved by explaining what we and others mean by *academic freedom.*

Academic freedom is the freedom of faculty members to teach at a school their own thoughts and promote acceptance of their own speculations and conclusions independent of what supporters of the school may wish.

The Fallacy In Identification Of Academic Freedom With Freedom Of Speech

In what follows various propositions, and the conclusions derived from them, will be considered. We shall (1) clarify terms which are being used; (2) examine critically the soundness of propositions (premises); and (3) determine whether certain conclusions follow from the premises. Because we are sure it will be helpful to do so, we shall use the customary syllogism which consists of three parts, for example:

(*Major premise*) 1. All men will die.

(*Minor premise*) 2. John is a man.

(*Conclusion*) 3. Therefore, John will die.

The major premise or proposition states the broad rule; the minor premise tells what or who can qualify to come under the broad rule; the conclusion declares that the general proposition is true for the specific case mentioned.

Here is a syllogism of that kind on the subjects of freedom of speech and academic freedom.

1. Freedom of speech is a universal right of men.
2. Academic freedom is nothing else than freedom of speech.
3. Therefore, academic freedom is a universal right of men.

The *minor premise* in this syllogism is not true. *Academic freedom* is not simple freedom of speech. Consider the obvious differences which are mentioned below.

If ten mature men are gathered on a street corner and are exchanging opinions, each is entitled to freedom of speech. (1) The other nine men do not need to listen if they do not wish; they can walk off. (2) Further, they are men who because of their maturity can independently reject or accept what somebody else says. (3) Finally, if what one man says displeases a second, that second person cannot injure the first as, for example, a teacher might do by declaring that a student is "flunking" the course.

The teacher's position is different. (1) Many pupils *must* attend school; they cannot walk away from what they hear. (2) They are, in most cases, immature and at a profound disadvantage against a teacher. (3) They are under the apprehension that if they disagree with what the teacher teaches they may be given a failing mark.

Therefore, the proposition that academic freedom is nothing else than freedom of speech is not correct.

Everyone, independently, will realize that there must be an error because the conclusion in the syllogism will appear incorrect to them. It reads: Therefore, academic freedom is a universal right of men. But a farmer does not claim academic freedom; nor a doctor; nor a truck driver. If something is a *universal* right as the conclusion declares, then everybody has it. However, only academic people claim academic freedom. It must obviously be something different from what is genuinely a universal right of men, namely, freedom of speech.

Let us approach the problem differently:

1. Every person is always entitled to express his opinions.
2. A teacher is a person.
3. Therefore, a teacher is always entitled to express his opinions.

This is the basic syllogism which underlies the idea of academic freedom. If these statements are correct then academic freedom must be allowed in Calvin College and in all schools.

The syllogism contains a serious error. The error is a common one, namely a homonymy (ho mon' y my) — that is, there is a key term in these propositions which has two meanings. The term which has two meanings is the term *person.* That term is used both in the major and in the minor premise.

In the major premise the term, person, means the person *as a human being and citizen.* In the minor premise the term means person *as a teacher.*

The syllogism should be restated and then its defect will be obvious. It should read:

1. Every person in his capacity *as a human being and as a citizen* is entitled to express his own opinion.
2. Jones *as a teacher* is acting in his capacity as a human being and as a citizen.
3. Therefore, Jones as a teacher is entitled to express his own opinion (to the class).

But now it is clear that in the major premise Jones is being looked upon as a person who is a human being and a citizen, whereas in the minor premise he is, in fact, being looked upon as a teacher.

The right of every man to freedom of thought and to freedom of speech is therefore not a right extended to him in his specific function *of teacher.* Jones, a teacher, can shout his ideas on every street corner *as citizen.* It is entirely different if he claims that right in his position *as teacher.*

Who Has Freedom At Calvin College?

If a member of the Christian Reformed church is to think in the customary groove he will say: control of what is taught in a school rests with one of three:

1. state
2. church
3. parents

(If control of what is taught rests with the state you have a *public* school; if control rests with the church, you have a *church* or *parochial* school; if control rests with the parents, you have a *private* school.)

Then we Christian Reformed Calvinists sit back and proudly say: we believe that the control should rest with the *parents* and *therefore* the school system should really be a *private* school system. And further, when the parents are Christians and insist on Christian instruction in their private school, then they may call their schools *Christian schools* (which is the customary name for the private schools supported by members of the Christian Reformed church; this support is by individuals as such and not as church members).

The trouble is that our list of possible *controllers* of the education of children is incomplete. We listed three:

1. state
2. church
3. parents

There should be a fourth, namely,

4. teachers.

The proposition involved in the idea of genuine academic freedom is that the *teachers* control the education — and not the state, nor the church, nor the parents.

Again, we are not challenging freedom of thought or freedom of speech for Calvin faculty members *as citizens.* Let them walk off the campus and *as citizens* express any idea that they wish; *that is their right as citizens.* When they walk back onto the campus they should not claim to control the teaching *unless the*

proposition that parents are responsible for the education of their children is wrong. If the responsibility of the parents is disputed then the whole foundation on which the theory of Christian schools is laid is in error and should be abandoned.

Who has *freedom* at a Christian school — the state, the church, the parents, or the teachers? In our judgment, *only the parents,* unless they *voluntarily* relinquish their right to someone else — state, church or teachers.

The Irreconcilable Inconsistency Between Potential Academic Freedom And Assessments To Support Calvin College

It happens that Calvin College is not a private (parental) school but a parochial (church) school supported by assessments on members of the Christian Reformed church. Everyone admits that as a *church* school it violates the proposition that the *parents* are responsible for the *education* of their children.

There is a historical explanation for this inconsistent situation. At one time a large percentage of the college students intended to become ministers; the college was primarily a preparatory school for the seminary. That justified at that time the parochial character of the college. Now, however, the overwhelming majority of students who attend the College have no intention to enter the ministry or are disqualified by sex from doing so.

Because of the history of the relationship of college and seminary every family in the denomination is assessed $12 per year in support of the college. The number of families in the denomination is presently 46,355 (1956 *Yearbook*). The assessment is therefore designed to raise $556,260 per year.

An assessment by the denomination is a claim, a demand. Presumably, if a man refuses to pay it, he can be disciplined and eventually ousted from the church.

If academic freedom were admitted for the faculty members in a denominational college, say Calvin College, and if there are assessments made on members of the denomination, say of the Christian Reformed church, then the conclusion should be that the members are being coerced to pay for something over which they have lost control.

To be consistent, the denomination must plainly deny the right to academic freedom or it should relinquish assessments for the school. If people would *voluntarily* wish to support academic freedom at Calvin College, that is their individual right. But to *assess* people to support academic freedom at Calvin College is another matter.

Academic Freedom And A Free Market

In its simplest form society can be organized on either of two foundations:

1. The sovereignty of producers; or
2. The sovereignty of consumers.

(There is a third type, namely, the sovereignty of a ruler or ruling class — a tyrant or a tyrannical government. Such a type may operate at the expense of both the producer and the consumer; it may be a leach on the public. But the public itself must organize society either on the basis of freedom (primacy) of producers or of freedom (primacy) of consumers.)

If Smith demands that he is to be sovereign as producer, he cannot (and still be consistent) be sovereign as consumer.

If he wants to have his way as consumer, then as producer he must cater to the wants of consumers. If he wants his way as producer, then consumers must be satisfied with what has been produced. No man can in a sensible manner demand that society be organized on a basis that the individual is sovereign both as producer and consumer. It is an impossibility.

The only society which we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM consider to be a Biblical society is a society organized on the basis that the *consumer is sovereign.* The producers must comply or conform to what consumers want, or they should and will go "broke."

Such a society is a *free market* society or, in economic language, a *laissez-faire* society. In Biblical language it would be called a noncoercive society, or a society based on *meekness.*

Now what is *academic freedom* relative to a free market society?

Academic freedom, *as the term is commonly being used,* is an educational system in which the producer is sovereign and the consumer is not. What the teacher, as producer, claims he has the right to teach, that, he declares, must be tolerated. What a student (or a parent for his child, as consumers of the knowledge being taught) want and demand is not to be heeded. Here in the case of academic freedom there is to be an exception to a society in which the consumer is sovereign. In this case, the producer (the teacher) is to determine what is to be taught and not the consumer.

It is obvious that academic freedom is an attempted exception to the great principle of a free society, namely, the principle that the consumer is sovereign.

Historians say that in the Netherlands the great ideas of economic and political liberalism took a peculiar emphasis, namely, an emphasis on genuinely free *education.* The *consumer* of education in the Netherlands has been protected by laws favoring *parental* or *any kind* of schools that the parents wanted. Liberalism in England and in America took another track and has not really as yet discovered the great soundness of the Dutch idea of *freedom in education.*

The Teacher And His Freedom

We come now to the *rights* of the teacher.

We propose first to inquire what is meant by a *teacher*; he can function in one or more of three ways: (1) in the customary sense of the term, namely, as a distributor of secondhand ideas; (2) as an original thinker; (3) as a research man.

Some teachers are all of these — distributors of secondhand ideas, original thinkers, research men. The question is: does academic freedom apply to a teacher in all, or in some, or in none of the capacities? The reasonable view appears to be the following:

1. As research men teachers should be completely free. How could research be done without freedom?

2. As original thinkers teachers should be completely free. How can a man be an original thinker if he must abide by the past?

3. As distributors of secondhand ideas teachers may in some instances be free, and in other instances not be free. We shall explain this in what follows.

A teacher as a distributor of secondhand ideas is not free to teach what he wishes if he is employed on the condition that he must teach what the buyers of his services want.

A teacher as a distributor of secondhand ideas is, however, free to teach what he wishes if he is employed on the condition that he may teach whatever he pleases. In this case, the buyers of his services have negotiated away their rights to determine what he is going to teach.

It depends, then, what is meant by a *teacher.* If he is doing research work or original thinking, the very concept of the work prevents restricting his freedom. If he is a distributor of secondhand ideas and no more, he can make a contract with his employers for freedom or be bound by whatever they specify. If, on the other hand, he demands that they employ him or keep him although what he will teach does not please them, then he makes an unreasonable claim. He is endeavoring to coerce them.

In great universities many opportunities are given for research. The teaching staff in such institutions have unrestricted liberty (1) in their research work; (2) in their original thinking; and (3) almost always in their teaching. That is a part of the explicit or implicit terms of their employment.

What is true of intellectual leaders in universities is less true in colleges; there is more teaching and less research there. In high schools and even more so in grade schools the work of a teacher is practically all teaching; there is really no research work.

A *research* man will practically never be teaching in a grade school or wish to teach his *original* findings to immature children. Instead, such a man would almost certainly publish his original ideas to his compeers, his fellow intellectuals, probably in book form or in a brochure of some kind. He will wish to expose him-

self to the correction of other mature minds. Having done so, and if he has not been found wrong in his *original* work, he will then wish to have liberty to spread his ideas.

But in all the preliminary steps he is really not a teacher *per se*. He is instead a thinker, a research man.

We will probably be the last to declare that as an original thinker and research man a man should be unfree. But to us *academic* freedom pertains to freedom in *teaching* and not to freedom in *research*. When, then, we attack academic freedom we are not attacking freedom of research or thinking, but freedom of distributing secondhand ideas which a "consumer" of those ideas may not want.

The Consumer Of Educational Services

We wish to consider the *consumer* of educational services.

Those consumers are pupils or students. Some of them are practically mature and have independent minds of their own; others are immature and have passive and impressionable minds.

Assume a man with a gifted son, twenty-five years old — intelligent, independent, critical. Assume that this son wishes to explore basically the field in which he will perform his life work. Assume further that the son is paying for his own education by his own labor or by a reduction in his inheritance. In this case, the consumer is the student. As in the middle ages, such a son may travel from university to university seeking the most diverse and provocative educators and ideas. This consumer wants what is new, different, challenging. There is, therefore, a great place for institutions of learning where anything you want may be got. Such institutions should advertise their academic freedom.

Assume on the other hand that a man has a mediocre, fifteen-year-old son, a son who is easily led, and who certainly is not personally responsible now for deciding what is to be taught to him in school. In this case, the *consumers* are the parents; they obviously are entitled to decide what such a son is to be taught. If after the son is five or ten years older and is as mature as he will ever be, and if he insists on having his own way about the

character of his education, then he has advanced into the position of being the real consumer.

Summary

We summarize on academic freedom as follows:

1. Academic freedom is different from freedom of thought and of speech. To consider academic freedom to be the same as freedom of thought or of speech is a serious error.

2. All persons are entitled to freedom of thought and of speech. Persons who are teachers have freedom of thought and of speech *as persons,* but they do not have freedom *as teachers,* unless the consumer, the buyer of educational services, contracts for and so grants that academic freedom.

3. The idea of academic freedom and the idea of private schools controlled by parents for minors cannot be harmonized unless the parents deliberately contract away to the teachers their (the parents') right to control the character of the education of their children. If they wish, they are entitled to contract away their rights. But if academic freedom is based on the premise that the parents *must* contract away their rights, then academic freedom must be wholly rejected.

4. Academic freedom is a relative term. The legitimacy of academic freedom increases as the student progresses toward maturity and objective judgment. A grade school is not a place for much academic freedom; a great university is a place for it.

5. Any dispute about academic freedom should pertain only to teaching proper, the spreading of secondhand ideas. Research and original thinking, by definition, cannot be restricted by lack of freedom.

6. The buyer of intellectual services, whether ordinary teaching or research or new ideas, can contract for what he wants. The buyer must be free to say what he wants if he *must* pay. Whoever pays is entitled to determine what he is to get, or otherwise he is being coerced. To be a member of a church and to be assessed for a school should give those assessed the right to determine the character of the education for which they are being assessed.

The Public School And Academic Freedom

Under certain circumstances academic freedom for teachers as teachers (as distinguished from research men and original thinkers) is a practical necessity regardless of what the parents of individual children may want.

The *public* is made up of very diverse people, in religion, culture, values, needs. If there is no uniformity in what the public wants, what is a teacher to do? He can teach on those subjects, few in number, on which there is agreement, the generally accepted view. On all other subjects he has no choices except: (1) follow his own views, or (2) bow to the view of some of his constituents.

Nonsolidarity of a constituency, that is, serious diversity of opinion among parents, practically prevents them from specifying what they want taught to their children. The *public* school system is, therefore, a system which involves, for most practical purposes, the abdication by parents to someone else what is to be taught to their children. It is either an abdication to a majority of parents, or to a dominant minority, or to the academic freedom of the teachers, or to the state bureaucracy.

If parents really wish to control the content of the education of their children, and the character of the environment of their children, there is only one solution, namely, private schools controlled by parents who essentially think alike. In an ideal school system, the *public* schools would be only residual, to take care of the education of the children of parents who are indifferent to the specific character of the education of their children. The children of other parents would be educated in private parental schools specifically as the parents wanted them educated.

Financing such a system should not be difficult. The customary taxes would be collected. The funds would be pro-rationed among various parental groups in proportion to the number of children involved. Those parents who joined no group or were indifferent would send their children to a public school, which would act as an omnibus institution, a catch-all to take care of those indifferent of belonging to any group.

Such a school system would be a *free* system rather than a *public* system. We are *libertarians* and therefore we are for free schools (with supplementary public schools).

Control of such a system should present no problems. Examination on factual and formal knowledge, for example, mathematics, the laws of physics, the events of history, could be tested by public examinations. The *values,* the judgments, the view of life which would be taught would all be left to the independent groups.

In summary, when the school system is so unsoundly organized that it does not readily permit the parents to control the education of their children, then that situation is still not a good ground for frustrating education. Education should go on. A public school teacher under the circumstances should go forward according to his own judgment. He has academic freedom *by default of agreement among parents.*

Opinions At Calvin College On Academic Freedom

In a lecture series in Chicago during the past winter under the auspices of the local alumni association of Calvin College, one evening was given over to the question of academic freedom. The two speakers were Professors E. F. J. Van Halsema and W. Harry Jellema.

Van Halsema presented the traditional idea that academic freedom was fully permitted at Calvin College *within the bounds set by the standards of the church,* but beyond that academic freedom could not roam.

This leaves, however, a wide field of disagreement. The creeds of the church are old and nonmodern and do not *appear* to be pertinent in the case of some current problems. Further, the denomination does not unequivocably take a stand on many important issues. The result is that a church member can easily be assessed to help pay for teaching with which he disagrees, as for example, that Greek "culture" will add much to the Hebrew-Christian religion, or that brotherly love is to be equated with desegregation. (We certainly would not object to *voluntary* desegrega-

tion for whoever wants it, but desegregation *as a requirement of brotherly love* we would certainly consider to be a deviation from the teachings of Scripture.)

The remarks on academic freedom by the other speaker before the Chicago alumni, Jellema, were such that we were unable to understand what his position is. Our uncertainty may be because of our lack of understanding.

The Problem Of A Calvinist University

In the Netherlands the Calvinists have a university of their own with the proud title, Free University.

If an attempt is made to develop a Calvinist university here, the first requirement should be that it is free, that is, not an institution supported by church assessments. Such an institution should be based on the sound principle of a *private* and not a *church* school.

This will give those who might lack confidence in the institution or the staff selected the liberty of not supporting it.

As a preliminary move, Calvin College should be de-institutionalized and put on a private school basis (as distinguished from its present illogical position as a church school).

Once a university was organized, the problem would remain which has been mentioned previously, namely, a *university* is a research and creative institution as well as an educational institution. On those functions of research and creative thought there should be no restrictions. This would require that teaching would be separated from research, or that a man could function as a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde, distinctly differently as research man compared with teacher. This will require some "organization" arrangements which would be different from orthodox arrangements. It *could* be done, but the problem would not be a trifling one.

fn

Sex Is Not Sin

BRIEF OF THE ARGUMENT

I

The "mission objects" of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are the people whom it is hardest to "convict of sin."

II

Scripture does not declare or imply that sex is sin. In religious terms: sex activity is based on Creation and not on the Fall of Man.

III

From a RATIONAL viewpoint sex activity which is RESPONSIBLE is not sinful. The important question is: what makes sex activity RESPONSIBLE?

IV

The teaching in Scripture regarding marriage is perfectly RATIONAL, that is, it simply makes the parties to a marriage responsible to each other and to society. That teaching is also conspicuously just.

V

Legislation by the State which does not insist that sex activity must be responsible is injurious to society, and is also contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Under those circumstances, restraint over members by a church should follow Scripture rather than the State because the rule is: We must obey God rather than men.

I

Preface

This publication, in its own peculiar way, is a *mission* publication. It is interested in promoting the acceptance of Christianity, including Christian ethics.

However, it is not addressed to those who are the most frequent objects of mission activity, namely, bums on skid row,

aborigines of the land, inmates of poor houses, prisons and asylums, or primitive negroes in Africa. Persons in these classes are the objects of an admirable mission interest on the part of many people. We have selected a different field.

We address ourselves to doing mission work for Christianity among typical people, that is, the people who have an average standard of living, who are not special objects of compassion by other people, who are not under the penalties of the law, who have a fair education, who may be *nominal* Christians for social or custom reasons, but people who nevertheless privately despise many of the things which Christianity teaches, towit, such ideas as man's proneness to evil, need of humility, need of salvation by grace, specific ethical demands outlined in the moral law, etc. (This list, of course, is very incomplete.)

People in the groups we wish to reach with the "message" of Christianity need as much as others a "conviction of sin" before they will ever "get religion." As the trite expression goes, "You cannot get religion without getting on the mourner's bench." Nobody will endeavor to improve himself via the path of religion (or any path) unless he believes he is not so good as he should be.

To convince a "respectable" citizen of "sin" is a difficult task. A businessman looked at the writer one day and made a calm remark which has stayed with him ever since: "There is not enough difference between you and me so that you should end up in everlasting bliss and I in everlasting perdition." The "differences" to which he was referring were in external, observable manner of living — respectability, abiding by law, kindliness, goodwill toward others, being a dutiful husband and father, good manners, giving the down-and-out a helping hand.

If it is difficult really to convince of sin a respectable and honorable man who performs some "civic good," it is even more difficult to persuade him that something which is not sin is sin. For example, there are some sex matters which modern people have come to appraise as not being sin regarding which some Christians do give the impression that they consider them to be genuine sin.

Scripture does not teach that sex is sin. It is not sex that is sin *but something else.* In order to promote strongly what Scripture does teach about sex, we begin by clearing away what Scripture does not teach.

II

Sex Is Not Sin

The ancient Greeks were more preoccupied with sex than the Hebrews were.

The Greeks, as Reinhold Niebuhr has pointed out, considered *sex* to be the really disorganizing factor in life. Greek tragedies revolve around that theme.

The Hebrews, in contrast, considered *pride* to be the really disorganizing motivation in life.

One result of these different approaches to life is that the Greeks considered *temperance* a great virtue. The Hebrews *never* mentioned it. They talked, instead, of *humility.*

Modern psychology divides, to some extent, into those same two schools of thought: (1) the sex motivation, the *libido,* is considered the great psychological villain by some psychologists; (2) the egoistic motivation, pride, especially in its inverted form of an *inferiority complex* and a sense of *insecurity* is considered the great psychological villain by other psychologists.

In Progressive Calvinism we are in the Hebrew and not in the Greek tradition. We consider pride to be the great villain. But we consider sex under certain conditions to be hard on the heels of pride as a very great villain, too.

In this issue we are, in a way, working over a phase or two of the *great* problem of the Greeks and of the *secondary* problem of the Hebrews. Our solution follows, we believe, exactly what Scripture teaches on the question of sex, but our preliminary analysis (argument) is rational.

In conformity with Scripture (and in accordance also with modern psychology) we submit for consideration the proposition

that *sex is not sin.* In contrast to that, it may appear to some that Scripture declares that sex is sin. Consider three examples:

1. The Tenth Commandment, namely, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, . . ."

2. The statement of David in Psalm 51, composed after his sexual involvement with Bethsheba: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

3. The statement in the Sermon on the Mount: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, that everyone that lookest on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Only *careless* readers will conclude from any of the foregoing that Scripture teaches that sex is sin.

In regard to the first quotation, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, the comforting statement of an old churchman comes to mind; it was that the commandment does not say, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's *daughter.* His point was well-taken. There is nothing sinful about a young unmarried man wanting a young unmarried woman *as wife.*

Attention should be given to the word *covet* as distinguished from *wishing to have in a responsible manner.* In this case wishing to have in a responsible manner means to want permanently and with all the responsibilities of marriage. For a young man to wish to have a young woman as wife under those terms is not sin, nor an indifferent matter, but a virtue; Solomon wrote: Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and *obtaineth favor from Jehovah.* (What has been italicized ought to make every woman feel good.) To want access to a woman without being responsible to her as husband is something quite different. Coveting can be defined as wishing to have without having responsibility to anyone for the acquisition and the possession. To want (covet) a woman on that basis is to do her and society a grievous wrong.

In regard to the second quotation (from Psalm 51), it is obvious that if the statement means that it is sin to be conceived, then it also means that it is a sin to be born, which latter propo-

sition everybody will consider to be absurd. The idea of sin in this context, therefore, cannot be to the act of conception or the act of birth, which idea unfortunately is the way in which some children reared under Christianity are permitted to interpret the text. The statement by David must be in regard to what he considered he inherited, which is something altogether different from the morality (or immorality) of the actions (1) of his two parents at his conception or (2) of his mother at his birth.

In regard to the third quotation, which is from the Sermon on the Mount, the statement may appear painfully difficult and critical. The text might be interpreted by some that to look at a woman is to sin. Men are indeed given to looking at women, and women certainly know it. Every effort of women in regard to clothes, make-up and cheerfulness is to attract the admiring glances of men. And what if a man looks! Does he sin?

If we read the text rightly, looking at the woman plus admiration by the man is not sin. Further, looking plus admiration plus awareness of the woman's sex is not sin. Finally, looking plus admiration plus wanting possession of the woman in marriage, provided the man is marriageable and the woman is marriageable, is not sin. The man may wish to marry the woman and she may be willing; everybody will rejoice in the prospective marriage. The man may wish to marry the woman and she may be unwilling; there will be no marriage. Did he sin in wanting to have her *as wife?* Not in our view.

The condemnatory expression in the statement is, we are sure, the phrase, "to lust after her." The phrase probably means either (1) *irresponsible possession* or (2) *unlawful possession.* By irresponsible possession we mean that attitude of a marriageable man relative to a marriageable woman which consists in his wanting possession but *without responsibility* for the subsequent care of the woman or children. By *unlawful possession* we mean possession of a woman by a man not eligible for marriage to the specific woman involved. Assume he knows he cannot have her because he is already married, not qualified for marriage, or because she is not qualified for marriage to him because of being married already herself. If he knows those facts, but if he nevertheless wants her contrary to the barriers that exist, and tolerates in his mind the

wish to have her, he comes, obviously, under the condemnation of the statement quoted. The wish to possess a marriageable woman as wife is not sinful; it is only the wish of a man to possess a woman who may not be his wife or to possess her irresponsibly which is sinful.

Sex sin, therefore, is not sexual relationship or the wish to have sexual relationship; it is, instead, only sex relationships and the wish to have sex relationships *under certain forbidden circumstances,* namely, circumstances which can be summarized by saying that they are "outside of marriage" or outside of the "wish of marriage."

To reduce the number of instances which arise from seeing a woman and "lusting after her" society has developed a variety of aids. One is that engaged girls wear engagement rings; another is that married women wear wedding rings. In some societies marriageable women wear different clothes than married women. These are practical devices to reduce instances of men wishing to have a woman not eligible for marriage. Rings should not be considered primarily as ornaments, but as practical aids to morality.

In summary, any conclusion that consists in considering every sex activity or its preliminaries as immorality cannot be based on Scripture.

III

The Rational Requisite Of Marriage Is That The Parties Accept Their Proper Responsibility

Marriage can be defined as a lifelong association between a man and woman, sanctioned by organized society if it exists.

Although the commitments made by the parties to a marriage are usually accepted as being lifelong, in a society in which marriage is not looked upon as permanent and in which divorce is easy, there may be a mental reservation in the promises made and the marriage may be begun as companionate, experimental and tem-

porary. Such mental reservations attack the foundations of marriage and sex morality, *because* they reduce the proper sense of responsibility.

Morality can be looked at as divinely given. It can also be looked at as common sense verified and validated by experience. The first approach is the approach of religious faith. The second approach is the approach of rationalism.

Men are steadily engaged in the effort to relate the "givens" of religious faith with the "findings" of reason.

It is important and reasonable that faith and reason be not unnecessarily contrasted and set over against each other. In what follows an obvious agreement between faith and reason in regard to sex morality is outlined. (This comparison of faith and reason is in conformity with our general approach to ethical "problems.")

Reason claims that it is *autonomous,* that is, that it stands objectively independent of all else, including revelation. It aims to be final in itself. In a limited way, as explained in what follows, we agree with that.

The only basic ground on which *reason* can genuinely stand alone is that it is logically *internally consistent.* The *values* and objectives in life, cannot be conclusively evaluated by reason. For that purpose, reason is not wholly adequate. But after a man has adopted certain values, aims and objectives whatever they are, then *reason* can appraise whether the means selected are suitable to attain the desired end. If the means are inconsistent with the end, then the program is irrational. The prime purpose of revelation does not consist in discrediting what reason itself can discredit by showing that it is inconsistent and contrary-to-purpose.

When then we in Progressive Calvinism appeal to "reason" we are not evaluating ends; we are evaluating means to those ends. If the means are obviously not suitable to attain the ends, then the means are irrational.

Society has only one *practical* procedure for seeing to it that the means selected are genuinely suited to the ends. That procedure consists in making men *responsible.* This is to apply the test

of experience. If men are made responsible, the end results of their actions will be as expected or disappointing, depending on the objectives and on whether the means selected are suitable or unsuitable for attaining the objective.

To make men responsible is to make them live in accordance with the operation of the laws of cause and effect. The laws of cause and effect as a by-product reveal whether means are suitable to ends.

Means which are suitable to attain objectives are not merely "rational." In our thinking, means which are suitable for attaining objectives are also "moral" in the sense defined. (This assumes that the objectives are valid.)

Basically, marriage should be a *stable institution.* We consider that to be a Biblical objective. If we are in error about that objective, it will be only because we have misunderstood Scripture. We shall not in what follows lose sight of the end just stated, namely, stability of marriages.

We consider that real stability can best be obtained by insisting on *responsibility* in regard to sex relations. By making people *responsible* in sex relations they will be cautious in establishing a fixed obligation in sex relations. The best way to make them cautious and responsible is to make the marriage relation permanent, except for notorious violations of the marriage contract which would make it unjust to require an innocent party to continue to be bound by the contract.

The desirability of marriage being stable is not really in dispute among social scientists. We catalogue a few of their reasons:

1. To break up a marriage is not fair to the children. "Broken homes" are a fertile cause of juvenile delinquency.

2. To break a marriage is not fair to the mate (particularly, the woman). A divorce status has not been considered by society to be an especially honorable status. Women usually remain responsible for the child (or children) of a marriage, thereby being handicapped in remarriage. New husbands accept the children from a previous marriage with reluctance (which of course

is usually concealed). The extent to which marriage is for the protection of women is clearly revealed in the well-known callous statement: A woman looks on marriage as establishing responsibility; a man looks on marriage as *limiting* responsibility; let the woman beware!

3. The presence in society of divorced persons constitutes a danger for existing marriages. The detached persons seek a new mate — anywhere. This appears to be especially true of women. Readers are referred to what the Apostle Paul wrote on the subject of young widows in I Timothy 5; see also I Corinthians 7:2, 8 and 9.

4. Nobody is perfectly suited to marriage nor is perfect as an individual. Everyone needs improvement. Marriage is an improvement institution, a mutual aid society. If a man must live *permanently* with a woman, he is under great inducement to improve her if he can; and vice versa for the woman relative to the man. But if the institution of marriage is not considered to be permanent, there is a lack of inducement for patient effort at mutual improvement.

5. Abandoning marriages often throws a burden on society. Any responsibility, which the parties to a marriage refuse to retain, gravitates to relatives, or other individuals, or to society generally.

6. Incompatibility between a man and woman in their relation as husband and wife is only infrequently a *unique* incompatibility; almost always the incompatibility will be a general incompatibility relative to any man or woman. In other words, the same incompatibility is likely to show up in the next marriage, The trouble is not in the marriage but in one (or both) of the mates.

7. When divorce and remarriage become easy and general and honorable, marriages will be undertaken with much less caution and consequently less soundness of judgment. It is universally observable that a person with whom it is difficult to make a deal, is usually difficult to deal with when making it *because he intends to live up to any promise he makes.* The people who make deals "offhand" are the people who go back on their word in an

equally offhand manner. When the last of the direct male descendents of Prince William of Orange (the Silent) came to the British throne (eventually, as William III), the British found him to be very "difficult." But Macaulay explains the reason: the earlier sovereigns in the Stuart family were prepared to promise anything freely, because they did not have the *determination* to keep the promise. But William III was reluctant to promise *because he was determined to do whatever he had promised.* Similarly, in marriages: they are likely to be successful in proportion as they have been entered into with the unqualified intent that the marriage will be permanent.

We can then, on a *rational* basis, state generally that sex relations which are responsible are permissible and not sin, but that sex relations or the intent of sex relations which are not responsible are sin.

There are contrary ideas which are widely held, namely, ideas such as the idea that marriage should only be as permanent as "love," with love defined as sexual appetite; or the idea that life does not consist of "adjusting" to the difficulties of a *permanent* marriage, but rather that life consists of adjusting to marriage problems by slipping out from under them and *escaping* to a new marriage. In these instances, a solution is sought under the cloak of some sort of "love," but this definition of "love" has no relationship with the idea of responsibility. (Neither does it have any similarity to the scriptural definition of love; see February, March and April, 1955, issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

From a *rational* viewpoint, a few additional remarks may be made about the characteristics of marriage.

1. *Temperance* in the Greek sense, will not contribute much to marriage. Temperance is an effect, not a cause. The effect, temperance, is caused by an acute awareness of *responsibility.* Being responsible is what keeps man temperate. A good awareness of responsibility will make a most valuable contribution to the contraction of a marriage and to the maintenance of an existing marriage. When the Greeks clutched somewhat frantically at the idea of *temperance,* they were really reaching for the idea of *responsibility.*

2. The essence of marriage, from the viewpoint of the state, is that it must not create circumstances wherein the irresponsibility of the marriage partners throws the responsibility on the state. Hence the state is interested in permanency of marriage. Where the responsibilities of marriage are rather small, namely, the wife also works and there are no children, neither the state nor the parties to the marriage always have a keen sense of "social responsibility." Break-up of such a marriage is not considered by some to be intrinsically overwhelmingly bad. There is, however, a very grave objection, towit, these detached mates, wanting new ones, often disturb other marriages and individuals.

3. Naive people look at marriage only as romantic; others look at marriage only as made by God. Those who are also analytical look at marriage as a highly "rational" arrangement governed by the laws of reason. That reason and "revelation" agree on the urgent need of marriage stability and individual responsibility is important evidence toward establishing the reliability of Scripture. (When reason and revelation disagree on mundane (earthly) matters something must be wrong.)

4. There is a strong drift in Calvinist circles toward the idea of *corporate responsibility*. *Corporate responsibility* is often another word for confusion or reduction in individual responsibility, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. The foundation of individualism is *personal* responsibility. The foundation of marriage is also *personal* responsibility.

5. Marriage is an institution that fits well into an *individualist* society. It is not necessary in a *socialist society*. The thoroughgoing theorists for socialist societies (whether Plato and Socrates, Fourier or modern communists, etc.) have all disestablished marriage as an institution. The *earthly* circumstances that make life worth living for a man are the private possession of a wife and of property. Socialism outlines a structure of society which permits the nonexistence of marriage, because "society" undertakes to be responsible for the women and the children; see March, 1956, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Individualism, on the other hand, as a principle for the organization of society, does not permit the nonexistence of marriage; it insists on the partici-

pants in the marriage relation retaining the responsibility and not shaking it off onto the rest of society.

6. Some Calvinists believe that they can be crossbreeds between socialists and individualists, that is, interventionists. (Interventionism consists of a set of ideas which inevitably results in socialism eventually; see June, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, page 172.) As a type of society, Interventionism may be considered to be less destructive to the institution of marriage than Socialism, but not so helpful an environment to marriage as is Individualism.

We come to the difficult question regarding what can destroy a marriage. Opinions will differ on what is sufficient grounds for breaking the marriage contract. The outstanding cause is adultery; other grave situations are willful and permanent desertion; permanent insanity; dangerous physical violence, etc.

Practically, the great issue is adultery. Psychologists have learned that people do not ever really forgive adultery of mates. Pretense or self-deception concerning forgiveness by the forgiver may exist. The psychological wound (trauma) is never healed nor healable. Time may be an excuse for a retaliatory adultery by the mate originally injured, which may be a fairly frequent sequel. Solomon has commented on the undying malice about adultery (Proverbs 6:32-35):

> He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of understanding: he doeth it who would destroy his own soul. Wounds and dishonor shall he get; And his reproach shall not be wiped away.

Then Solomon explains the psychology:

> For jealousy is the rage of a man; and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

According to this quotation, you cannot buy jealousy off and it is useless to pay blackmail. For a husband to accept "gifts" in settlement of adultery is to look on his wife's adultery as sexual intercourse made good by the subsequent payment of money. This

is a form of prostitution, the payment being somewhat late. The woman will herself never forgive that; she might sell herself for money but will never again respect a husband who settles for money. All these things are universally "felt" more clearly than they can be put into words.

Sex should not, in the estimation of significant people, take up all of life. Too much time spent on sex will take time from other worthwhile things a person should do in his short span of time. Women generally despise a man spending time indiscriminately on women; men generally despise a woman who is constantly devoting time to getting male attention. People say: They are "no good."

The reason why there is a widespread recognition for adultery being considered grounds for divorce is because of a sense of "justice." To be obliged to keep a mate guilty of adultery contrary to the wish of the injured party is injustice. The principles of permanence of marriage and of marriage responsibility are required to bow before the principle of justice.

Secular society, however, has come to acknowledge many grounds for divorce. The result is that there are many divorces.

But once divorced, most divorced people are prepared to trot to the marriage altar as soon again as possible and there are many remarriages following divorce, whether the divorce was on the grounds of adultery or some other grounds.

IV

The Teaching Of Scripture Regarding Marriage, Divorce And Remarriage Is Rational And Just

The legislation in Scripture on marriage, divorce and remarriage is simple, rational and just.

Scripture teaches:

1. Sex is not sin. Scripture gives wide latitude on marriage. It does not outline a eugenics program. It does not consider

sex or the marriage itself to be at fault in marriages that fail, but the parties to the marriages. Marriage is not only an honorable state, but is much to be preferred to the unmarried state. All this we consider to be solid realism, and neither sentimentalism nor idealism.

2. The marriage must, however, be considered permanent, that is, responsible. There were two schools of thought among the ancient Hebrews about marriage. One view was that a marriage could be easily ended. Some Pharisees in New Testament times held to that idea. Christ said:

> Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh . . . (Matthew 19:4-5).

On this basis the responsibility to enter the marriage state outranks the responsibility of a son toward his parents; the statement is: "*for this cause*" — that is, in order to have a wife, a man shall leave his parents.

3. The only permissible ground for divorce is adultery, and the innocent party is entitled to obtain a divorce on that ground and be remarriageable. Christ in the same incident referred to in the foregoing said:

> They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery (Matthew 19:7-9).

On this basis marriage must be considered permanent, except for a divorce obtained by the innocent party on the ground of adultery.

4. Adultery is discouraged by Christ by his declaration that the *guilty party is not remarriageable.* The disciples of Christ,

their thinking being typical of the prevailing thinking of their time, remonstrated indicating that they thought the terms outlined for marriage were too severe. The remainder of the incident, which is the most significant of any part of it, reads as follows:

> The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, that were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, that were made eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (Matthew 19:10-12).

The *eunuchs* to whom reference is made are of three kinds: (1) men who are naturally sterile, who cannot beget children; (2) men who have been castrated (usually when young) and who therefore cannot beget children; and (3) men of a third kind, namely, who voluntarily make eunuchs of themselves *by not remarrying* after they have obtained an un-Biblical divorce or have been Biblically divorced by an innocent mate. This voluntarily being a eunuch (abstaining from a second marriage) is declared by Christ to be rough-going; he says: "Not all men can receive this saying; . . . [and] he that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

In the quotations from Christ one thing is perfectly clear. In order to make people *responsible* in marriage, and therefore to make it permanent, he legislated that: (1) there is only one ground for divorce; (2) the innocent party may insist on his (her) right to divorce, and be remarriageable; but (3) the guilty party was not remarriageable; if he wanted to be in the "kingdom of heaven" he would have to make himself a voluntary eunuch, that is, not remarry.

The terrific leverage then that Christ applies to people to keep them faithful to a marriage consists in this: the necessity of their being eunuchs — abstaining thereafter from sex acts — if they have obtained divorce improperly or have been divorced because of their own adultery.

There may be considerable differences of opinion on this "legislation" on remarriage by Christ. Many will prefer the posi-

tion of some of the Pharisees, who were not severely opposed to divorce and remarriage.

The position of Christ (as outlined in the foregoing) will always jolt and sober any person who gives heed to it. The consequence will be that: (1) although men will (and should generally) marry, they will give great care to taking a wife; (2) they will be faithful to their wives; (3) they will not obtain an un-Biblical divorce and they will be afraid of being divorced on the grounds of adultery; (4) the reason will be that although they may want to remarry, they will have to deny themselves that for "the kingdom of heaven's sake." However, because (apparently) some cannot "take that," they will remarry, nevertheless.

This doctrine may be considered to be too severe but it is highly logical (rational). Any other doctrine, as of some of the Pharisees, will unavoidably eventually result in unrestraint on divorce and remarriage. The issue will always have to be to accept either the position (1) of Christ or (2) of the particular Pharisees disputing with him. There is no inbetween position possible; some may deceive themselves that there is, but they have not thought through the problem to its final consequence.

V

The Problem Of Obeying God Or Man In Regard To Remarriage

Sexual irregularity will occur not infrequently. The instinct to procreate is too powerful always to be kept leashed. Scripture does not pose the sex problem in the form of complete abstinence or of complete license; it permits sex activity which is responsible, that is, within marriage (marriage being essentially an institution to make sex activity responsible).

There are two routes which this not-easily-repressed inclination for improper sex activities can follow, namely, (1) personal license, and (2) laws of the state permitting easy divorce and remarriage; in the second case what was originally personal license acquires the sanction of the state. The first is a personal problem which we are here ignoring. But the second is a problem of social signifi-

cance and it will be analyzed here, albeit briefly. The analysis will be compressed so that it will merely be schematic:

1. *Un-Biblical divorce.* This is the *origin* of the main problem, but it is not the main problem. The main problem is the almost irresistible inclination of divorced people to remarry, if they can find a mate, and their actually doing so. If they have been divorced with the consent of the state, the state considers them remarriageable, and will authorize a new marriage. The main issue then is: should the churches consider the new marriages valid, or adulterous initially and permanently?

2. *Remarriage following un-Biblical divorce.* If there had been no un-Biblical divorce, there could be no un-Biblical remarriage. If there were no remarriage authorized by the state, the guilty individual would not be considered eligible for new sexual activity. The problem of any church in regard to un-Biblical remarriages, therefore, *is created solely by the action of the state* in permitting the new remarriage. If the church abides by the un-Biblical action of the state in authorizing a new marriage, then the church has really surrendered its moral attitude in regard to divorce and remarriage into the hands of the secular authorities. The Roman Catholic church and the Church of England have avoided this abdication of their moral independence in marriage matters by not recognizing divorces and remarriages which are contrary to their interpretation of Scripture. Other churches have not seen the problem similarly, and have a policy of accepting all secular acts in regard to un-Biblical divorce and remarriage without protest.

3. The general problem involved in the foregoing, namely, whom to obey when they disagree, God or the state, has been discussed before in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM; see the August, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, page 218; September, 1955 issue, page 251; October, 1955 issue, page 284. When the ethical teachings of Scripture disagree with the laws of governments, we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM hold to the proposition that "We must obey God rather than men." A strongly pious note of others that we must obey the government, because "the powers that be are of God" falls on deaf ears. That doctrine we consider a misinterpretation of Scripture and a vicious evil. The basic *universal* rule is:

"We must obey God rather than men." The *special* rule, wholly subordinate to the basic rule, is to "obey the powers that be" *when and only when* their activities and ordinances do not conflict with the ordinances outlined in Scripture.

4. The doctrine that a remarriage following un-Biblical divorce is valid just because the remarriage has been authorized by the state is then an obvious case of participating with men in a program condemned by Christ. In fact, as explained, the question of un-Biblical remarriage is exclusively due to action of the state contrary to Scripture. Some churchmen in effect say that it is the will of God that we disobey Him in order to be submissive to the ordinances of a secular government. Some may think this right, but if it is, then they should admit that there is a broad — and fatal — general principle underlying their position on un-Biblical divorce and remarriage, towit: *on every moral question the church should follow secular legislation.* If and when that is conceded and allowed, the church will be only a shell.

It is our observation that it is those churchmen who wish the church to follow after the state on divorce and remarriage, *even though the state is acting contrary to Scripture,* who are the men who rather regularly favor the church following the state on other ethical problems. They misinterpret the idea of Paul: "The powers that be are of God." To accept tacitly or openly the general principle which they appear to be accepting will destroy the church as an independent moral institution. fn

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